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THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

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KCI in a lurch as council rejects an agreement with Edgemoor

BY BILL TURQUE AND STEVE VOCKRODT
THE KANSAS CITY STAR

Edgemoor Infrastructure & Real Estate on Thursday stood on the brink of losing a $1 billion deal to design and build a new KCI terminal after a supermajority of the Kansas City Council rejected a proposed agreement.

And while the firm survived a hectic Thursday council meeting, it could still lose the job.

Councilmembers threw out a memorandum of understanding with Edgemoor, the product of negotiations between the firm and the city's hired legal team from Husch Blackwell.

They expressed concerns about the agreement's vague terms, insufficient community benefits and worries about a provision that could pay Edgemoor up to $30 million if the deal never closes.

Quinton Lucas, a 3rd District at-large councilman, said the memorandum left open several questions.

"There's a reimbursement agreement that obligates the city to potentially millions of dollars, a number of those costs incurred before the election," Lucas said. "There was absolutely no detail on financing. I know we want flexibility, but we also want to know what we are binding the city to, potentially for years to come."

It was an at-times tense council deliberation over the Edgemoor agreement, cut in half by a one-hour closed-door meeting.

SEE KCI, 5A

FCC ends net neutrality after chairman shrugs off 'hysteria and misinformation'

SCOTT EISEN Bloomberg

Demonstrators hold up angry-face emoji signs during a protest against the Federal Communications Commission's decision to repeal "net neutrality" rules that have governed internet service providers since 2015. Commissioners voted 3-2 along party lines to repeal the rules.

BY MARK DAVIS
mdavis@kcstar.com

Net neutrality rules in force since 2015 ended Thursday as the Federal Communications Commission, ignoring protests and polls, voted to reduce regulation of internet service providers.

FCC Chairman Ajit Pai shrugged off the public backlash and polls that show most Americans don't want his plan.

"There's been a lot of hysteria and misinformation frankly over the last several weeks," Pai told The Star on the eve of the agency's vote on his controversial proposal.

> **"IT'S LIKE DOING A TRUST FALL WITH LOTS OF PEOPLES' LIVES.**
>
> ***Eze Redwood, Kansas City entrepreneur who has worked on internet issues***

Pai cited claims by "elected officials and others" that the plan would break the internet or end the internet as we know it, and that American democracy itself is threatened.

"It's no surprise that people become very alarmed," Pai said. "I would be, too."

Instead, he called Thursday's vote by himself and four other FCC commissioners mundane.

By a 3-2 vote, split along party lines, the commissioners returned regulation of internet service providers to the "light touch" that started under President Bill Clinton and prevailed until the FCC put in place what Pai called "heavy handed" regulations under President Barack Obama in 2015.

"When people wake up Dec.

SEE NET NEUTRALITY, 5A

JoCo manager's ouster will cost taxpayers big time

BY LYNN HORSLEY
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The Johnson County Commission's 4-3 vote to terminate the contract for County Manager Hannes Zacharias will cost taxpayers more than $100,000.

That's because he's entitled to a separation payment equivalent to six months of his $219,665 annual salary for non-renewal of his employment contract.

Hannes Zacharias

Plus, the commission approved a motion Thursday to pay Zacharias up to $1,500 per month for up to 18 months, or until he finds a new full-time job.

Commission Chairman Ed Eilert said that payment would cover Zacharias' health care costs after his county employment ends Dec. 31.

The commission narrowly voted Nov. 30 not to renew the annual contract for Zacharias, 63, who has been county manager since 2009. Many employees and residents have complained bitterly about that decision, saying they considered Zacharias to be a highly skilled manager for a well-run county

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Republicans faced a new round of uncertainty about their tax bill with the possible defection of Marco Rubio. **9A**

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TEVA TO SLASH WORKFORCE

The company with operations in Overland Park said 14,000 workers would be let go but did not specify where cuts would come. **6A**

BUSINESS

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